

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
San Antonio Fire Department
MEMORANDUM

TO: SAFD and DSD Associates

FROM: Carl A. Wedige, Interim Fire Marshal

DATE: June 27, 2007

FILE: Code Interpretation Manual

INTERPRETATION NUMBER: CI2007-004

TITLE: Requirements for the installation of notification appliances in common areas and employee work areas.

CODE EDITION: 2006 International Fire Code as adopted and amended by the City of San Antonio

SECTION: 907.10.1.1 and 907.10.1.2

PURPOSE: To clarify the requirements for the installation of notification appliances in common areas and employee work areas, and to clarify the definition of common areas.

QUESTION 1: Section 907.10.1.1 of the International Fire Code as adopted and amended by the City of San Antonio requires that visible alarm notification appliances be provided in "public areas and common areas". Given the fact that "public areas" constitute areas that are accessible to the general public, how does the San Antonio Fire Department define what constitutes a "common area"?

ANSWER 1: The San Antonio Fire Department defines a common area as an area that may be shared by two or more individuals (e.g., shared offices, meeting rooms, conference rooms, huddle rooms, break rooms, storage rooms that are accessible from corridors or open work areas to which access is not restricted, etc.).

QUESTION 2: Many of the areas stated above in Answer 1 have sufficient space to accommodate more than one person. However, storage rooms that are accessible from corridors and open work areas vary in size in many designs ranging from something little more than a closet, to an area that may encompass an entire half of a facility or story. Is there a minimum area threshold set by the San Antonio Fire Department that is considered of an adequate dimension to require the addition of a visible notification appliance?

ANSWER 2:

Yes. In the interest of accommodating individuals with disabilities and in order to establish a clear standard for notification appliance requirements in these areas, the San Antonio Fire Department has established a total area of 100 or greater square feet as the threshold dimension for a storage room required to be equipped with visible notification appliances.

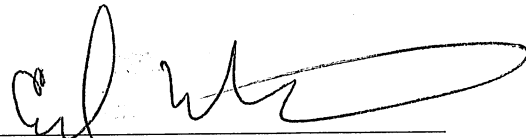
Note that additional requirements may be present in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, and in the Texas Accessibility Standards. The answer provided here serves only to clarify the position of the San Antonio Fire Department with regard to the 2006 International Fire Code requirements.

QUESTION 3:

Section 907.10.1.2 of the International Fire Code requires that the wiring system for notification appliance circuits be designed so that "visible alarm notification appliances can be integrated into the alarm system", where employee work areas are provided with audible alarm coverage. Modern fire alarm system notification appliances do not require any special arrangements or cabling to integrate visible notification into the existing system. Does this statement then imply that audible alarm coverage is sufficient for employee work areas as long as visible or combination audible and visible appliances may be easily installed in the place of the existing audible only appliance?

ANSWER 3:

No. In the interest of accommodating hearing impaired persons, and to offset the need for submitting additional applications for permit to conduct a remodel of an existing fire alarm system, as well as ease the financial burden that would be placed upon facility owners should such applications for permit be required, the San Antonio Fire Department will require that employee work areas be treated as would any other areas of the facility that are accessible to the general public. Thus employee work areas will require the installation of visible or combination audible and visible notifications appliances that will meet the audibility and visible coverage requirements of NFPA 72.



Carl A. Wedige
Assistant Chief
Interim Fire Marshal
San Antonio Fire Department